

What is claimed is:

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1. A method of forming a bidding auction over a remote information server, comprising:

allowing each of a plurality of users to view a current bid and place a new bid for an item in an auction; and

automatically updating a view seen by at least some of said plurality of users to reflect a change in a current highest price on said item, without requiring an action by said some of said plurality of bidders for said updating.

2. A method of bidding on an auction over a remote information server, comprising:

placing a bid in an auction over a remote information server; and

defining a time profile for the bid, where the time profile specifies at least one amount of a bid to be set at a specified time in the auction other than a current time.

3. A method as in claim 2 wherein said time profile comprises a plurality of maximum bids which are allowed at a plurality of specified times.

1 4. A method as in claim 2 wherein said specified time
2 is measured ~~relative~~ to a scheduled auction end time.

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1 5. A method as in claim 2 wherein said bids are
2 provided to an agent program, which keeps the amounts of the
3 bids secret until a time that is specified by the bid.

1 6. A method as in claim 2 wherein said agent stores
2 locally, on a users bidding terminal, certain amounts which
3 facilitate ~~accepting~~ or rejecting bids without contacting a
4 remote server.

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1 7. A method of conducting an auction on the Internet,
2 comprising:
3 conducting a first portion of the auction in a mode where
4 users view an item, and a price for the item, in an non-
5 interactive manner; and
6 conducting a second portion of the auction in an
7 interactive manner, in which the auction participants place
8 real time bids, which real time bids are seen automatically by
9 other participants in the auction.

1 8. A method ~~of~~ automated auction bidding comprising:

2 storing, for a specified auction, a plurality of bids,
3 and a plurality of times when those bids are to be released,
4 respectively; and

5 automatically placing each of said bids at said time
6 associated with said bid.

1 9. A method as in claim 8 further comprising conducting
2 said auction on a server, and storing certain information
3 about said auction on a client that is accessing said server,
4 and further comprising enabling certain bids to be rejected,
5 without accessing said server, using only information stored
6 on said client.

1 10. A method as in claim 8 where each of said plurality
2 of bids are stored as rules, each rule being kept secret until
3 a time of a bid, and each bid being released at said time.

1 11. A method as in claim 10 further comprising checking
2 an identification of a person making the bid.

1 12. A method as in claim 8 further comprising enabling
2 placing a quick bid, which automatically provides a bid that
3 is high enough to win a current bidding situation.

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1 13. A method of automated auction bidding, comprising:
2 allowing a plurality of users to bid on an item, where
3 one of the plurality of users has a highest bid, and at least
4 one other of the plurality of users can bid an amounts that
5 exceeds said highest bid; and
6 enabling a quick bid function whereby a user can
7 automatically bid an amount which will win the auction, said
8 amount being an amount sufficiently high to overcome all
9 existing bids.

1 14. A method as in claim 13 wherein there are a
2 plurality of bids, some of which are known and others of which
3 are secret, and wherein said quick bid only overcomes those
4 bids which are known.

1 15. A method as in claim 14 wherein said plurality of
2 bids includes a plurality of bids, associated with times when
3 those maximum bids can be made, and only those bids whose
4 times have been reached are known.

1 16. A method as in claim 15 further comprising enabling
2 an action which allows determining both secret bids and non-
3 secret bids.

1 17. A method as in claim 16 wherein said action includes
2 an extra fee beyond that which would be charged for only non-
3 secret bids.

1 18. A system, comprising:
2 a server running a program that displays information
3 about an item to be auctioned, and accepts bids on said item,
A 4 and keeps track of a maximum bid; and
5 a client, sending a bid to said server which includes an
6 amount of a bid, and a time when said bid should be placed,
7 wherein said time is other than a present time.

1 19. A system as in claim 18, wherein said server
2 automatically updates at least one screen being seen on at
3 least one client to automatically show new bid amounts.

1 20. A system as in claim 18, wherein said client allows
2 sending a plurality of bids, to be executed at a plurality of
3 times.

1 21. A method as in claim 13, wherein an amount of said
2 quick bid is displayed responsive to a specified action by the
3 user.

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